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Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Environmental Policy

Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

Sixteenth session
Istanbul, 16–17 April 2015
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the sixteenth session

To be held in Istanbul, starting at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, 16 April 2015*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of the Bureau.
3. Shared Environmental Information System in support of environmental assessments, reviews and outlooks.
4. Environment-related high-level conferences in the period 2015–2017.
5. Review of the progress in establishing the Shared Environmental Information System in the pan-European region.
6. Other business.

II. Annotations

According to its 2015 terms of reference (ECE/EX/2015/L.2, annex I),[1] the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment is open to all member States of the United

* The venue of the meeting will be specified at a later stage.

[1] At the time of writing the new terms have not yet been adopted by the Executive Committee. They

Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Members of the Working Group are officials in ECE countries dealing with environmental monitoring and assessment. The Working Group is mandated to involve experts from statistical agencies, relevant services and major groups in its activities.

International forums and networks — such as the European Environment Agency (EEA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Statistics Division, the World Health Organization European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO/ECEH), relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), especially those of ECE, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development — are also invited to participate.

The documentation will be posted on the Working Group's website.[2]

The Working Group meeting is being organized back to back with the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) Regional Conference (Istanbul, 13–15 April 2015) in order to rationalize resources and to forge mutual benefits.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Working Group will be invited to adopt the agenda for its sixteenth session, as set out in the present document.

2. Election of the Bureau

The Working Group is expected to elect its Chair and two Vice-Chairs, who will constitute the Working Group's Bureau for the period of the 2015 mandate.

The members of the Working Group are invited to start consultations on possible candidates prior to the meeting.

3. Shared Environmental Information System in support of environmental assessments, reviews and outlooks

Regular environmental or environment-related assessment reports, reviews and outlooks are prepared in connection with high-level conferences and meetings to better understand the state of affairs and the progress made towards established goals, as well as to agree on further priorities and measures necessary to safeguard the environment and improve human well-being.

The Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS), when established, should support and facilitate the preparation of regular, good quality assessment reports, reviews and outlooks.

The Working Group will be invited to consider the components of such documents, and the needs for the related underpinning data and information.

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are expected to be adopted at the Executive Committee's seventy-fifth meeting, in February 2015. The previous terms of reference of the Working Group (ECE/CEP/2012/6, annex) set out the Working Group's mandate for the period 2012–2014.

[2] See http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=38414#/.

In this regard, the secretariat will facilitate the provision of information on the components of various assessment reports, e.g., the sixth edition of GEO and regional environmental assessments, as well as other reports, including sectorial ones (air, water, etc.), and possibly future reports on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Information will also be provided on how these assessments could benefit from building upon data and information available in one pan-European SEIS, and how it could decrease the reporting burden for countries, while, at the same time, increasing the cooperation between key international partners.

The Working Group's considerations will be submitted to the second meeting of the Group of Friends of SEIS (Geneva, 11 May 2015), which has been mandated to provide advice on how the regular assessment process should be organized and shaped, taking into consideration the benefits of SEIS.

4. Environment-related high-level conferences in the period 2015–2017

Several high-level conferences related to the environment will be held in in the period 2015–2017 in the pan-European region, including the Seventh Forest Europe Ministerial Conference (October 2015), the Eighth Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference (Batumi, Georgia, 8–10 June 2016) and the Sixth Environment and Health Ministerial Conference (2017).

In this context, the Working Group will be invited to consider how to shape the establishment of pan-European SEIS in the period until 2020 — i.e., setting milestones — so that it can also contribute in the short term to the upcoming conferences and, in particular, assist the preparation of the related assessment reports, including the sixth edition of GEO.

The secretariat will facilitate the provision of the information on the conferences and the assessment reports in preparation.

Furthermore, to make an informed decision on the establishment of milestones for the pan-European SEIS, the Working Group will be informed of recent progress in the production and sharing of environmental indicators by the countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

5. Review of the progress in establishing the Shared Environmental Information System in the pan-European region

The Committee on Environmental Policy at its twentieth session (Geneva, 28–31 October 2014) adopted targets and performance indicators for SEIS. It further mandated the Working Group to review the progress in the establishment of SEIS, based on the adopted targets and performance indicators, with a view to preparing an evaluation report on progress made by the pan-European countries in establishing SEIS for the Batumi EfE Ministerial Conference. An initial assessment report should be presented to the Committee at its next session (Geneva, 27–30 October 2015).

The targets cover the three building blocks of SEIS: Content, Institutional Cooperation and Infrastructure. The targets guide both SEIS establishment and operation.

The SEIS performance indicators measure advancement towards the SEIS targets. The performance indicators are defined for both the SEIS establishment and operation phases: initial SEIS development, SEIS implementation and SEIS sustainable operation.

The targets and the performance indicators are applied by the countries, and the results should be reported through a user-friendly reporting tool. The reporting tool should be made available to countries before the first reporting period.

Furthermore, to be able to apply the target and performance indicators across the pan-European region, agreement has to be reached on the priority data flows.

The Working Group therefore needs to organize the review process and, in particular, discuss and agree the data flows, also taking into account the conclusions of its previous two sessions. The agreed data flows are an essential component of both the pan-European SEIS and the reporting tool.

Upon the agreement on the data flows and the reporting tool, the Working Group is expected to decide on the review process, so that an initial SEIS establishment review report can be prepared in time for the twenty-first session of the Committee on Environmental Policy. In this regard, the Working Group should also decide on the dates for any meetings to be held before that session.

While deliberating on the review process, the Working Group will be expected to consider ongoing developments related to work on data flows and the existing subregional SEIS reporting mechanisms, etc. The secretariat will facilitate the provision of the information on the ongoing developments.

6. Other business

At the time of writing, the secretariat had no points to propose under this item.

III. Organization of work

The information on a detailed organization of work will be released closer to the meeting time.